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SUBJECT: GOMA SITUATION UPDATE

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The recent absence of the principal Congolese actors from Goma has resulted in lost time and inefficiencies in the Amani process. The Joint Technical Commission on Peace and Security is now not meeting, but the International Facilitation and MONUC are mapping out a plan for revitalizing the disengagement plan development process. Joint Monitoring Group Task Force sessions continue to be productive and working relationships between the participants appear to be developing nicely. At the same time, the number of FDLR members returning to Rwanda or entering a return process remains low. There has been a recent large turnover within the Facilitation, and overall MONUC is weaker on the facilitation front than in the recent past. End summary.

Goma Process Update

¶2. (SBU) The recent absence of the principal Congolese actors from Goma has resulted in much loss of time and inefficiencies with regard to the Amani process. Father Apollinaire Malu Malu is currently in South Africa; Admiral Etumba is in Kinshasa; and Machako, head of humanitarian assistance, is out of the country. General Vainqueur Mayala, Commander of the 8th Military Region, while in Goma, appears relatively uninterested in the process. While the U.S. Facilitation in Goma has been told that Malu Malu, Etumba, and Machako should all have returned to Goma by next week, the recent lack of progress on the Amani program is connected to their absence.

¶3. (SBU) The Joint Technical Commission on Peace and Security (JTCPS) is not meeting currently, although the Military sub-Commission will in theory meet to move the "disengagement plan" forward. The CNDP continues to boycott the sub-Commission, and FRF remains on strike in Kamombo. The North and South Kivu mai-mai take turns failing to turn up for scheduled meetings or insisting that their demands (mostly related to per-diem payments and other benefits) be dealt with before they will participate in the actual work of the sub-Commission. At the same time, for reasons that remain unclear, the South Kivu mai-mai engineered a meeting of the plenary JTCPS on July 1, which was stillborn as the Facilitation members who showed up outnumbered the armed groups two to one and thus no quorum was attained.

¶4. (SBU) In an effort to move the process forward, the International Facilitation and MONUC are mapping out a strategy for revitalizing the disengagement plan development process. Although not completely fleshed out, the strategy will be to have the sub-Commission begin working again (even without CNDP participation) by means of moral suasion and withholding of salaries, and at the same time hold a parallel track with the CNDP. The idea is to bring Nkunda and the CNDP to Kimoka, where substantive discussions regarding CNDP's vision of disengagement will take place with the Facilitation and Malu Malu. Once these two processes are operational, the Facilitation and MONUC will determine how to merge them. The Facilitation will contact Malu Malu to ensure his buy-in into this plan.

Nairobi Process Update

¶15. (SBU) Joint Monitoring Group Task Force meetings continue to be productive and working relationships between the participants appear to be developing nicely. At the same time, the number of FDLR members returning to Rwanda or entering a return process remains low. The large numbers of defecting/returning FDLR that were anticipated after the Kisangani conference have not materialized. However, MONUC and the World Bank are counting each repatriation as a signal that returns are increasing. Rwanda's figures for actual combatants who have returned continue to be significantly lower than the figures provided by MONUC. Part of the difference is explained by the more exhaustive verification performed in Rwanda that purportedly identifies significant numbers of non-combatants mixed among the returnees.

Military Developments

¶16. (SBU) There are unverified reports that the Rwenzori mai-mai are collaborating with the Ugandan rebels ADF/NALU in the Grand Nord, and that the Ugandans are reacting strongly to this claim. There are likewise unconfirmed reports that Bosco Ntaganda may be on the move - to Walikali or to South Kivu - with a battalion-sized force. The Kifuafua mai-mai is reportedly taking note of this CNDP 'advance' but has not engaged militarily.

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Facilitation and MONUC Staffing

¶17. (SBU) There has been a recent large turnover within the Facilitation, and overall MONUC is less robust on the facilitation front than in the recent past. Colonel Pecheux of EUSEC has departed Goma, while two new EUSEC officers (Dagna and Rudi) have recently arrived. Bernard Sexe, representing the French Embassy, will arrive in Goma this week. MONUC has strengthened its eastern division staff at the mid-levels with the arrival in the past two weeks of Philip Winter and Spiros Dimitrios, working mostly on the stabilization plan but picking up some of the slack on the facilitation side. The position of Chief of Staff, held until recently by John Almstrom, has yet to be filled. Almstrom's deputy - Menada Wind Andersen - has departed Goma permanently. Alpha Sow, North Kivu Head of Office, continues to do double duty standing in for Almstrom and also continuing to run MONUC in North Kivu.

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